

Yellow Cards – Sadness

| | |
|---|---|
| Draw something that makes you sad, and have the group guess what it is. | When was the last time you felt sad? |
| What is a positive way to express your sad feelings? | What is a negative way to express your sad feelings? |
| Define sadness. | Tell the group what makes you most sad about your family member being away. |
| Ask another group member what makes him or her sad. | When you are sad, is it hard to concentrate on schoolwork? |
| What are some solutions to dealing with sadness? | What do you think your family member would say to you about your sadness? |

Green Cards – Lonely

| | |
|--|--|
| Draw something that makes you lonely, and have the group guess what it is. | When was the last time you felt lonely? |
| Define lonely. | What is a solution to when you feel lonely? |
| What do you miss about your family member? | Tell the group what makes you most lonely about your family member being away. |
| Ask everyone in the group, “Do you feel lonely sometimes?” | When you are lonely, is it hard to concentrate on schoolwork? |
| Who can you talk to if you are feeling lonely? | What do you think your family member would say to you about your lonely feeling? |

SESSION 6: LET'S TALK ABOUT IT

Session Time: 45 minutes

Objectives:

- Students will have the opportunity to share what they miss about their family member in war.
- Students will identify people in their lives they can turn to during a difficult time or even if they just need someone to listen.

Materials:

- Blank puzzles that can be bought at a craft store or craft Web site
- Crayons/markers/colored pencils
- One plastic sandwich bag for each student
- People in My Life worksheet (see p. 39)
- Writing utensil

Activity:

- Begin the group by asking the students to draw a picture of one thing they miss most about their family member being gone on the puzzle letter sheet or blank puzzle.
- Have each student share his or her drawing with the group. How does it feel to talk about your family member, especially now that the group has met for six weeks? Ask group members if they talk about their deployed family members often. Just in group, outside of group, in class, at home?
- After sharing, ask students to cut along the lines of the picture puzzle or break apart the blank puzzle. Put the pieces in a baggie and put in the honor box for the student's family member.
- Explain that it is important they feel comfortable talking to someone they trust about their feelings and thoughts. When they miss something about their family member, it is a perfect opportunity to think, "Who can I talk to?" It is healthy to want to share what you are thinking and feeling.
- Have the group brainstorm about some people they can talk to about their family members. Hand out the People in My Life worksheet to all group members.
- Ask students to make a list of people they can turn to if they need someone to listen by using the People in My Life worksheet as a guide. Give students enough time to write down names and really think about their resources.

- Once students are finished with their lists, come back together as a group. Generate a list that is easily viewable by the whole group. Let students share who they can turn to. Make sure the students list you (the school counselor) and the other students in the group. This is an opportunity to make sure the students realize they are not only attending group for themselves but also to be a support to each other.

Process:

- Have students think about the list of people they know they can talk to. Have them discuss examples of times when they might need to talk to these people. Ask if they feel comfortable talking about their feelings; refer back to previous lessons on feelings and anxiety.
- Ask students who the first person on the list is that you would turn to if they needed someone. Ask why they chose this person.
- Ask the students for examples of times the people on their list helped them (regarding deployment or any other time).
- Ask the students to come up with additional people they would talk to.
- Discuss the benefits of talking about thoughts and feelings.
- Ask the students to think of something they have kept inside their head regarding their family members' deployment. Pass out index cards so students have a chance to write if they feel more comfortable writing vs. talking.

Homework:

- Journal: Tell your family member what you miss most about having him/her around. Talk to him/her about who you can turn to for support and a listening ear. Tell him/her what you have been doing in school and at home while the person has been gone.

Blue Cards – Anxiety

| | |
|---|---|
| Draw something that makes you anxious, and have the group guess what it is. | When was the last time you felt anxious? |
| Define anxiety. | What is a solution to when you are worrying about your family member? |
| In general, what makes you anxious? | Tell the group what makes you most anxious about your family member being away. |
| How do you feel when you feel anxious? Answer and then ask someone else in the group how he/she feels, too. | When you are anxious, is it hard to concentrate? |
| How many times a week do you feel anxious? | What is something you are anxious about at school? At home? |

Purple Cards – General Feelings

| | |
|--|---|
| Draw a picture that expresses an emotion. Have the group members guess what the “feeling” is. | If you had to rank your feelings regarding your family member’s deployment, what would the top three feelings be? |
| Talk about a feeling you have regarding your family member’s deployment. How does the feeling affect your day? | On a scale of 1-10, how does it feel to talk about your emotions? (1 = very difficult, 10 = very easy) |
| How are you positively dealing with your family member’s deployment? | How are you negatively dealing with your family member’s deployment? |
| Ask each group member to share how he or she is feeling right now. | Do you feel like others understand you right now? |
| What is the hardest thing for you to deal with while your family member is away? | Free card: Ask the group any question you want to help you to feel more connected. |

People in My Life

Who wants to listen? Who cares how I am feeling? Make a list below.

Family:

Friends:

Teachers, School Counselors and Other School Staff:

In the Community:

Other:

SESSION 7: RESILIENCE

Session Time: 1 hour

This session will probably take longer than the other sessions because it focuses on how to take all of the information already discussed and use it to positively affect the student's life, despite the deployment. For younger students, it may need to be simplified. It can also be stretched into two lessons, especially for older students.

Objectives:

- Students will look at specific life events and discuss control as related to these events.
- Students will look at ways to be in control of their own lives, despite their family member's deployment.
- Students will talk about how they can bounce back from hardships by being resilient.

Materials:

- My Lifeline worksheet
- Blank paper for brainstorming
- Writing utensil
- Note to parents

Activity #1 – My Past and Present

- Tell students they will be telling their life stories and writing about their futures.
- On a blank piece of paper, have students list significant life events that have happened from birth to present. For younger students, it may be important to brainstorm these events: births, deaths, awards, moves, sicknesses, family changes, deployment, etc.
- Ask students to transfer the information to the My Lifeline worksheet on the side labeled "Events."
- Once all of the life events have been listed, go back and have students write their feelings about each event. Also, who had control over each event (self, mother, father, no one, etc.). The goal is to have students see that some of the adverse events in their life (such as parental deployment) have been out of their control.

Process #1:

- What kinds of feelings do you have when you see the things that have happened in your life so far?

- What things did you have in common with other group members? What things were different?
- If there were things you could have controlled, what would you have done differently to change things?

Activity #2 – My Future

- Now, on a scratch sheet of paper, have participants brainstorm what they would like to have happen in their lives from today until the “end of their story.” Have students be specific (age, place, event, etc.)
- Give each group participant another My Lifeline worksheet. Ask each student to transfer his or her future life events to the lifeline on the side labeled “Events.”
- Once all the life events have been listed, go back and have students write how they would feel for each event if it occurs and who would have control over each event (self, mother, father, no one, etc.).

Process #2:

- Discuss what the students will need to do to achieve future events. Emphasize the importance of what students can do now to promote future success.
- Have students compare their future lifeline with the one from the past. Ask: “What do you notice about the control of these events in your future?” Guide students to see that their future is hopeful and that they have control over what happens to them in many circumstances in their lives. Help students realize that despite the deployment of their family member, they have choices for their future. They are in charge of their lives.

Homework:

- Ask group members to share their future lifeline with someone they feel comfortable with outside of group. Make a copy to include in their Honor Box so they can share with their deployed family member.
- Let students know next week is the last session and that you will be mailing out the honor boxes. Talk to students briefly about things that can be included in the boxes other than those items that will already be included from group time. Have them take a note home to their parents (see p. XXX).